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NOVEMBER 8, 1950

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The Sketch

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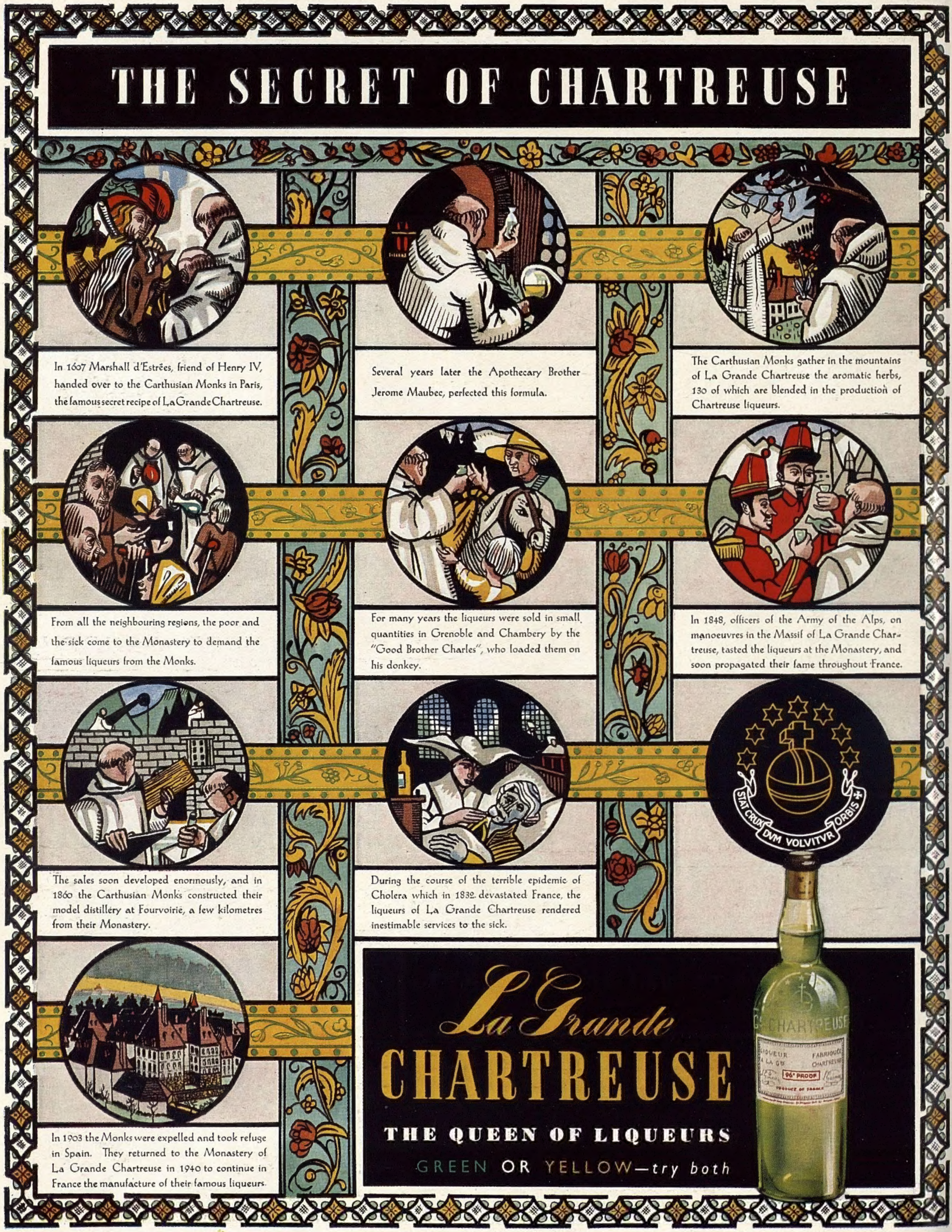

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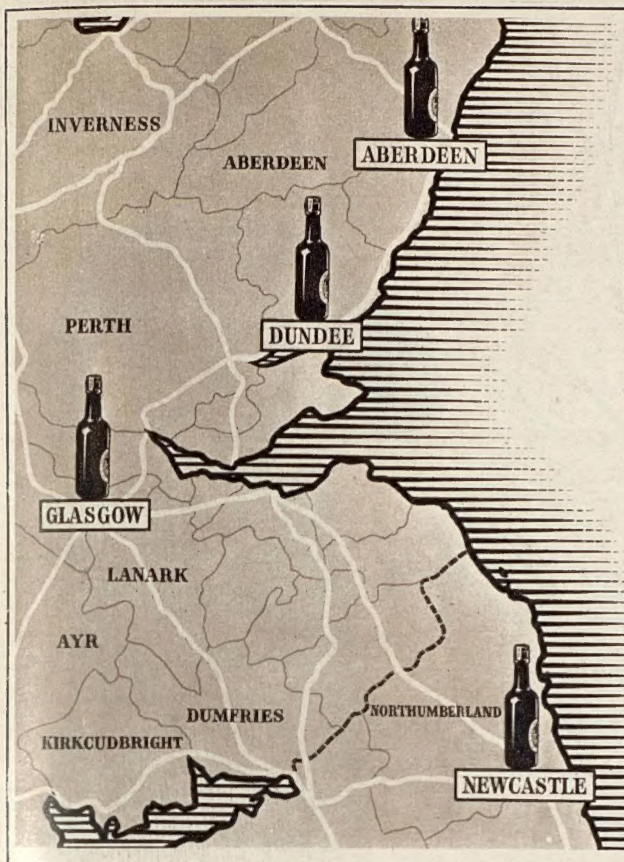

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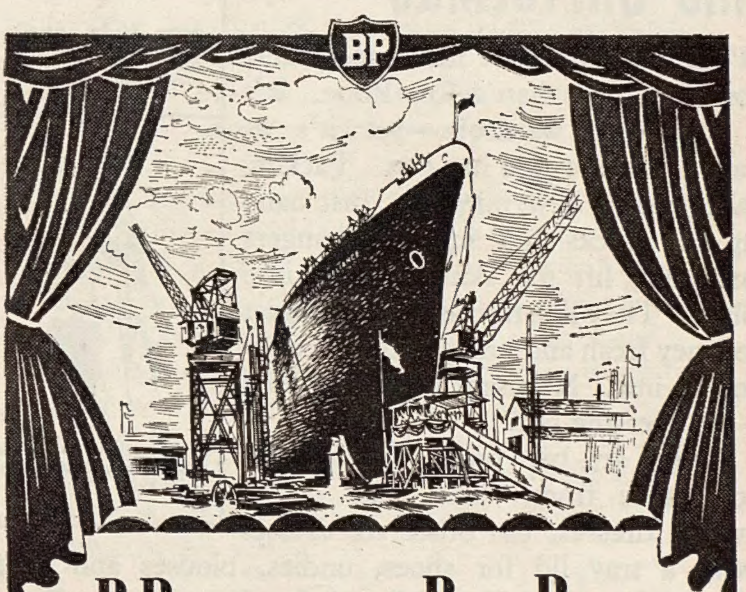

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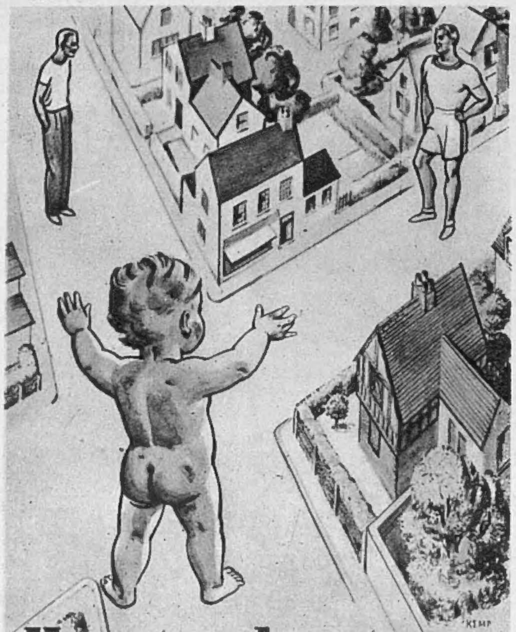

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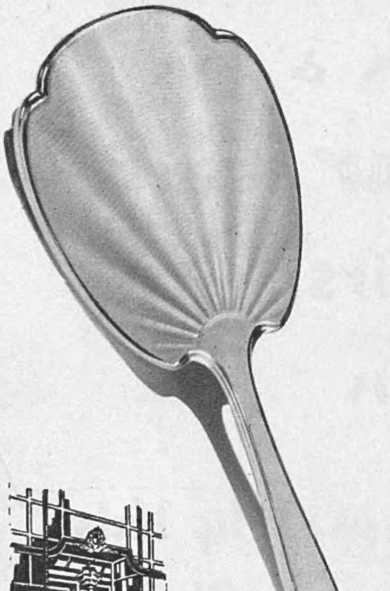

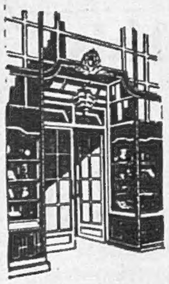

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The Sketch
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 1950

LONDON'S FESTIVAL
LADY MAYORESS

The Hon. Mrs. Denys Lowson, wife of the new Lord Mayor, is the younger daughter of the first Lord Strathcarron, and the City's youngest Lady Mayoress. She has three children.

The memorable scene in Westminster Hall when the King, standing beside the Queen, addressed both Houses of Parliament during the stately ceremony which marked the official opening of the new House of Commons. On the left are members of the Royal family.

Sketch-Book

Beverley Baxter

As Professor Joad remarked on so many occasions—it all depends. To-day I ask you to gaze upon two scenes and ask yourselves : Is it Fair ?

Scene One is at Westminster Hall, with the Lords and Commoners assembled to thank His Gracious Majesty for permitting the House of Commons to have been rebuilt in the Palace of Westminster. On a platform at the right in the centre of the famous hall are some twenty trumpeters in gorgeous non-utility uniforms, looking as if they had come straight from one of Shakespeare's historical plays.

Nothing is so stirring as the wild, ecstatic, compelling sound of trumpets. This is almost the only musical instrument which is not expected necessarily to hit the note exactly. In fact, hoarseness in the tone and even a certain discordance adds to the thrill. Tennyson called on the wild bells to ring in the New Year—but what bell can send blood coursing through the veins like a trumpet ?

On the way out, after the Royal Family and the hierarchy had made a stately departure, the rest of us moved slowly to the exits. In a commendable spirit of democracy the trumpeters mixed with us. They were all young men, but then perhaps you have to be young for that kind of blowing. At any rate, they looked modestly pleased with themselves and had every right to be.

Which ends Scene One.

* * *

By contrast I want you now to come to the Clerkenwell Police Court. A young man named Dennis Jones is in the dock, and in his hand is a trumpet.

"Can you play a bit of a military march ?" asks the magistrate. Up comes the trumpet and out pour the stirring, piercing notes. The very walls vibrate and the windows tremble. Then to show that even a trumpet has its softer moments, young Mr. Jones puts on two mutes and plays the march again.

The trouble is that although trumpeters are like gods on Olympus in public, they unfortunately have to live private lives. And this is what his neighbours, fellow lodgers, and landlady had to say about Mr. Jones :

The Landlady : For five years he has been playing scales on his trumpet. He doesn't seem able to play any tune.

An ex-Lodger : He plays like a corporal in the N.A.A.F.I.

A Neighbour : He keeps my baby awake.

The kindly magistrate scratched his head and adjourned the case. He wanted time to think, or perhaps he had such a splitting headache he couldn't think.

Which ends Scene Two—and The Tale of Two Trumpets.

And I repeat the question : " Is it Fair ? "

Before we leave the subject of music and its ability to rouse the savage breast, I must confess that music critics seem to me a particularly tough lot. Nothing pleases them. Either the fourth movement is taken too slowly or too quickly, or the conductor is at complete variance with the strings, or the brass is petulant and the wind is out of sorts.

I do not know the identity of *The Times* music critic (I hope he is not some Tory M.P. masquerading as an expert on the subject), but I give him full marks for the most devastating verdict in the least number of words that I can ever remember. Reviewing a recent production of *La Bohème* at Covent Garden, he concluded his notice with these words :

> " As Musetta Miss —— threw away the second act by consistently singing above, or around her notes, as well as behind Mr. Gellhorn's beat."

Otherwise, no doubt, Miss —— was all right.

At any rate, I shall now conclude this criticism of critics with my two favourite classics—which I may or may not have quoted in a previous *Sketch-Book*.

> 1. " At the end of the play the producer made a curtain speech and said that the author had left London for New York two weeks ago. It seems a long start."
>
> 2. " I see that in my review of this musical comedy I have knocked everything but the chorus girls' knees, but in their case God had forestalled me."

Cultural Note.—I have just looked at my score of *La Bohème* to see what is required of Musetta. This is what the librettist has to say : " Mademoiselle Musetta was a pretty girl of twenty, very coquettish ; rather ambitious ; but without any pretensions to spelling." You try putting that to music. . . .

The new House of Commons has had a mixed reception. The trouble with it is that architects, like many other people, think that if something is new it must mean progress. So what about a controlled heating system with an even temperature throughout the sitting ? On paper that sounds exactly right, but what happens in practice ?

Question time, from 2.30 to 3.30 p.m., is always crowded, not only on the floor of the House but in the galleries. Now it is a scientific fact that crowds engender heat, both physical and psychological, so what was intended to be an even temperature throughout becomes almost a suffocating one when the House is crowded.

Then take the vagaries of debate. When Mr. Churchill speaks the House fills up, but when Sir X. Y. speaks the rush for the exits is a positive menace to life and limb. What price the even temperature then ? Of course, the engineer below might have a guide to form and turn on the heat or cold according to the individual speaker. But imagine the feelings of an M.P. when he rises to address the House and feels the torrent of hot air to compensate for the general evacuation of human bodies.

Then there is the colour scheme. Seasick green has never been my favourite shade, but that is the general effect of the new Chamber at the time of writing. One of my colleagues looking at the Government Front Bench in this strange colouring murmured : " It is like the library at Belsen." Another M.P. confessed to me that he felt as if we were meeting at the bottom of an aquarium. A third chap said that the whole thing looked like the headquarters of a rather pretentious insurance company that is not quite solvent.

However, I put my money on Dick Stokes, who is in danger of becoming known as the Minister of Good Works. He is a daring fellow who brings to the Government the bold approach of a man who has done marvellously well out of private enterprise. In the difficult task of making the temperature fit the crime, and evolving a colour scheme that will bring back the roses to our cheeks, I am certain that he will not rest until it is accomplished.

What a curious thing life is. . . . How often the element of drama or pathos intrudes upon the reality of the day and captures our unwilling thoughts.

The other day among the leaves in front of my house I saw a tiny bird trying to fly. Obviously it was hurt, and I picked it up, a well-intentioned act which was rewarded by the poor little thing pecking rebelliously at my hand. It was coloured like a canary but was something else. Like Madam Butterfly I know little of ornithology.

But what can one do with a stricken bird ? As men have done since the beginning of time, I compromised with conscience, and taking it into the garden left it among the leaves in the hope that somehow it would find its way to its nest. Whereupon I went to my study and resumed an article on " The Riddle of Russia."

It was no use. The Russian riddle could not obliterate the problem of the little thing in the leaves. Supposing Max, the Aberdeen Terrier, got hold of it ? Supposing the cat next door came over the garden wall on a marauding expedition ? Supposing it crept away and died of hunger ? Not even the ominous hands of the clock demanding that the Riddle of Russia should be solved in time for the messenger to take it to the printer could drive the bird from one's thoughts.

So out I went to the garden. It was still there, but as I reached down it ran across the lawn and crept close to the opposite wall. We held a family council, and how comforting the females can be on such an occasion. They are so much closer to life than men.

True to the efficiency of their sex they turned to the telephone directory and located the nearest R.S.P.C.A. branch, and off we set in the motor car. A very pretty girl listened to our story and then took the bird in her hands, and as she did so the little creature made a last desperate bid for freedom. But it was no use.

" He's injured his back," she said. " He'll have to be put away."

Like a jury we tried to recommend mercy. Could the bird not be tended and then, where we could watch, let it be put back to where we first found it, in the hope that it would return to the nest.

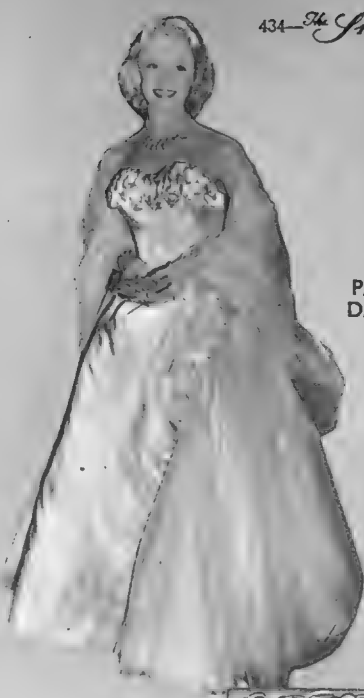
" No," said the girl. " If he did get back to the nest the others would kill him because he had been in contact with humans."

I repeat that I know nothing of bird life, but suddenly this poor little winged creature seemed like a dispossessed thing without hope. There was only one sentence—death in the gas chamber, if that is not too lurid a description for a whiff of chloroform.

So we salved our conscience by putting something in the gift box and we left the girl gently stroking the bird's head with her finger.

The Riddle of Russia ? It had to wait until next day, for, somehow, the words would not come.

Beverley Baxter



PATRICIA DAINTON

IRENE DUNNE

PETULA CLARK

ANDREW RAY

CLAUDETTE COLBERT

JEAN KENT

THEIR MAJESTIES, THEIR ROYAL HIGHNESSES, SOME GLAMOROUS STARS, AND THE MUDLARK HIMSELF AT THE ROYAL FILM SHOW

SUSAN SHAW

VALERIE HOBSON

ROYAL INTERROGATION

THIS delightfully informal picture was taken after the christening at Buckingham Palace of Princess Anne, second child of T.R.H. Princess Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh. When the Queen opened her handbag Prince Charles, burning with a small boy's curiosity, peeped inside to see what was there.

Photographed by Baron.

Candid Cameo

FRANK OWEN

By Ian Coster

THE impact of Frank Owen on the beholder is immediate and potent. He is as handsome as a Hereford bull, and as strong and compact of frame. He comes from Hereford ("Sudeten Welsh," he called himself at an appropriate moment in World War II.). His father's people were merchant seamen and his mother's were farmers.

I once asked him whence came the vitality which could seat him, after a long and punishing series of late nights, before a hearty breakfast. He replied: "The sea and the land, my boy; they 're a good combination"—and proceeded to attack his bacon and eggs and the day's problems.

The impact of Owen on people who know him well varies widely. Lloyd George, under whose wing he joined the House of Commons as the baby M.P. more than twenty years ago, is alleged to have said, "There, if he plays his cards right, goes the future Prime Minister." Tom Driberg, M.P., once described him as "the Savonarola of the night clubs." His wife, Grace, a beautiful American dancer, whom he pursued around Europe's capitals in a wildly expensive courtship, used to call him "My private buzz-bomb."

Presumably Owen has *not* played his cards right, because he is no longer in the House of Commons. That, in many ways, is a pity because he has fervour, eloquence, wit, a love of the limelight and that God-given quality, leadership. The Liberal Party could do with him now.

When Hereford decided it did not want its son Frank as its M.P., he turned completely over to journalism and forged forward from being Beaverbrook's leader-writer on the *Daily Express* to editing (and reviving) the *Evening Standard*.

His loud arguments for a "second front" brought official attention: he was called up. He concentrated his energy and brains on becoming a good trooper in Tanks and was sent to Sandhurst. Mountbatten picked him as the man to start Forces' papers in South-East Asia Command. Owen blasted his way through red tape and official interference and finished the war as a lieut.-colonel with an O.B.E. He then joined the *Daily Mail*, and until a month or so ago was its Editor. Now he has returned to the Beaverbrook fold as *Daily Express* columnist.

So let us now contemplate Owen in his middle forties. He is over 6 ft. and rising 15 stone (a bit overweight, but his figure retains some of the symmetry of the rugger three-quarter who just missed his Blue at Cambridge). His thatch of springy hair is ungreyed. For signs of his age look under his eyes; the "bags" are obvious. In an unkind moment I once called them revelation trunks.

From the taverns of Fleet Street to Mayfair night clubs, and on and out to a variety of spots in Paris, New York, Calcutta, Rangoon, Singapore, he is known to all and sundry as Frank. Only the most junior and recently-joined members of his staff call him "Sir," or "Mister Owen." Mountbatten calls him Frank; so does the C.I.G.S., Slim; so do waiters, doormen, barmen, hostesses, compositors, generals, politicians and taxi-drivers from Brixton to Broadway. Nobody is less of a snob than Owen; no one is a better mixer. He loves to be loved. That is why he completely lacks the ability to say "no" to any old or new pal who wants help. His purse is as open as his friendship; champagne (his favourite drink) flows, mostly at his expense, when his friends gather around him.

Yet he has enemies. He is quick to make them, quick to fight them—and quick to forgive them. In his younger days he was dangerously fast with his fists. His genial mood could flash into red-hot anger. His father, the ex-sea captain, is responsible for those outbursts. Father once took young Frank aside and said, "Now, Frank, your mother has said to you 'never do anything that will make me ashamed.' But you 'll do many things which will make her ashamed. I want you to promise me that you 'll never do the one thing which will make me ashamed. And I 'll be ashamed if—no matter where you are, be it Buckingham Palace or a tavern—you hear somebody tell a downright lie about any friend of yours and you don't step right up to him and tell him so, and, if he still wants convincing, hit him smack on the nose."

Young Frank promised. And though the years have taught him that persuasion by the clenched fist is not always the best nor most reasonable argument, he has never forgotten the promise. Owen will still stand up and call out a liar. Now that occasionally makes a "scene," which frightens the well-mannered middle classes; but Owen is never scared of scenes; he thrives on them.

The spectacle of Owen in a rage is awe-inspiring; it is like watching Etna spouting lava and cinders. And, like the volcano, he pours his wrath on the just and the unjust with perfect impartiality. But having achieved the objective, which may be a simple little thing like finding a lost letter, his anger subsides into a beautiful, singing peace.

These halcyon periods are much longer and more frequent than the explosions. Owen, relaxed, is a prince of good fellows, able to make the brightest of after-dinner speeches, to swap anecdotes in a bar, to broadcast with passion and sincerity on a favourite theme such as the lot of the miner, or to give witty battle to his fellow editors over the air.

He likes to give the impression that he is a big, bad, bold, ruthless buccaneer, but the inner Owen is tender, sensitive, thoughtfully liberal. He appears to be reckless, but he is a calculating gambler with life (petty gaming on horses, dogs or cards leaves him cold, though he does occasionally bet and win on the result of an election).

Whither Owen? Perhaps he will go back into politics. Perhaps he will concentrate on writing, for which he has not only great talent but an exacting self-criticism. Though it was written at speed for newspaper serialisation, his *The Three Dictators* (Mussolini, Stalin and Hitler), published in 1940, is still vigorous, controlled narrative. His *Campaign in Burma* is a model of reporting and collating.

Owen has been in the Far East, but is expected home in a week or so to resume his forceful commentaries. Will writing a column every other day keep this character busy? Or will the buzz-bomb explode again under somebody's editorial chair? Owen says: "NO! Three times in the 'hot squat' is enough for anyone."

However, men do return to the scenes of their crimes . . .

★

Who . . . Me?

COSTER is being more polite to me in print than ever he 's been in person. Three times this man has fired me from being his Editor—once on the *Evening Standard*, once on "SEAC," and once on the *Daily Mail*. I induced him back on to the *Standard*; Mountbatten talked him back to "SEAC"; before I could do it again on the *Mail* I was out myself!

Coster says I have been too handy with my fists. Wrong. I have had more hidings than I can count. . . . He says I 'm tender. Touchy, he means. . . . He says I 'm nowhere grey. Take another look, Coster! . . . He says I thrive on scenes. Everyone knows that it is the other fellow who starts these things up with me . . .

Frank Owen

Photomontage by Angus McBean

FRANK OWEN OF BATTLEFLEET STREET

Photographed by Cecil Beaton.

OCTOBER BRIDE: A CHILDHOOD PLAYMATE OF THE PRINCESSES

MISS ZOË D'ERLANGER, only child of the late Mr. and Mrs. Robin d'Erlanger, was married recently at St. Margaret's, Westminster, to Mr. Paul C. Hyde-Thomson, son of Mr. and Mrs. Hyde Hyde-Thomson, of 36, Victoria Road, Kensington. She was given away by her uncle, Major Edward Compton, of Newby Hall, Ripon; four little bridesmaids and two pages attended her, and Captain John Hyde-Thomson was best man. The bride's graceful gown was made of silver and white brocade. Her childhood friends, Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret, were not at the wedding owing to their attendance at the opening of the new House of Commons.

DATE-BOOK
(Our Social Diary)

October 10

Left. - At St. Margaret's Westminster, Mr. Richard J. Boughey, son of Sir George and Lady Boughey of Glynde, Sussex, married Miss Davina Wright, - daughter of Mr. and the Hon. Mrs. Fitzherbert Wright, of Grantham.
also-
Miss Barbara Price-Hughes (right) showing her portrait of pianist Miss Eileen Joyce to that lady, at Walker's Galleries.

October 11

At the reception after their wedding at St Paul's Knightsbridge, the Earl of Plymouth and his bride, - née Miss Caroline Rice. (Right) Some Guests present were The Hon. James Tennant, Miss J. Chancellor, Lady Glenconner, Miss Caroline Debenham.

October 12

After the 1¾ mile Lowther Stakes at Newmarket, Racehorse owner Mr. Churchill patted his ever-winning Colonist 2.
also- Lady Stott with Lady Munnings and her Peke Black Knight went to the opening of the Society of Marine Artists' Exhibition at the Guildhall.

DATE-

October 12

Two Pursuivants of Arms, Mr. Frere (Bluemantle) and Mr. Trappes-Lomax (Rouge Dragon) were at the Knights of the Round Table dinner at the Mayfair Hotel.

also (right) Miss Ann Waugh on School Treat, winning the Newmarket Town Plate by ten lengths.

October 14

(Left) During the Blackpool Conservative Conference, Mr. Anthony Eden and Chelsea's M.P.—Commander Noble, took the sea air.

also (right) Captain Gerard Coaker of Battle, Sussex, married Miss Edith Darley of Ranby Hall, Retford—at St Mark's, North Audley Street.

October 16

(Left) Mr. Gerald Moira, President, Mr. Ernest Thesiger, and Sir W. Russell Flint, R.A., were at 195 Piccadilly, to open the R.O.I.'s Exhibition.

October 17.

When the Wine and Food Society members celebrated the Golden Wedding of M. and Mme. André Simon, the famous gastronome congratulated the Maître Chef des Cuisines, Jean Kaufeler, of the Dorchester upon the dinner.

-BOOK

October 17.

(Left) A party which included a number of diplomats held in the Pompadour Room, Stratford Place, was attended by Lord Courtauld-Thomson, Lady Willingdon and the host and hostess, Mr. & Mrs Thomas Lilley, Junr.

October 21

Talented young painter Elizabeth Wolf and one of her sitters, filmstar TREVOR Howard at her first Show of paintings and drawings in the Studio Club.

October 21.

(Left) Reception at Hampden House, Great Missenden, after the Wedding of Mr. Neville Whitcoak Robinson, and Miss Stella Hope-Morley–daughter of the Hon. Claude and Lady Dorothy Hope-Morley–at St Mary Magdalene, Great Hampden.

October 26

Married at St. Peter's, Eaton Square: Miss Robina Colquhoun, daughter of the late Sir Iain Colquhoun and of the Dowager Lady Colquhoun; and Mr. Alan Wigan, Sir Roderick and Lady Wigan's Son.

October 28

In the Army Hunter Trials at Twyford, the Winning Unit team (Captains, Subalterns and Officer Cadets) were the 12th Lancers, left to right–Lt. Lumsden (on TREASURER), Captain Forsyth Forrest (on BROWN SUGAR), Capt. Critchley Salmonson (on NAUGHTY GIRL)

N.B.

In the top right-hand Corner of page 333-4 of our issue of October 11, a photograph of two Guests of the Countess of Seafield's Shooting-party was reproduced.

These Guests were incorrectly named Mme. MARISIA PONIKIEWSKA and Count STEFAN ZAMOYSKI, who were also present. We much regret any annoyance this may have caused the parties concerned.

JB

DATE-BOOK

(Abroad)

October 9

Epernay.- France.
800 Paris guests toasted Maurice Chevalier's new film MA Pomme & his 50 years in Show business, in Moët and Chandon's huge Cellars. Lady Diana Cooper is with the Duc de V. Talleyrand-Périgord. (Right) Lady Patachou baptised Maurice's film with a magnum.

October 10.

(Left) Paris.
Backstage snapshot shows France's President and Mme. Auriol, - Supervising State dinner preparations at the Elysée to honour Morocco's Sultan.

October 11

Australia.
Coming-of-age ball for daughter Jean was given recently at Melbourne's Government House by Sir Dallas Brooks, Governor of Victoria

October 12

Left: New York.
Sir Thomas Beecham arrived with his wife in "Queen Mary" to tour U.S.A. with his Royal Philharmonic Orchestra.

October 13

Paris.
Britain's Pat Smythe patted Kilgeddin, - (Owner Col. Llewellyn) when she had broken the women's Show-Jumping Record.

IN THE WEST END AGAIN

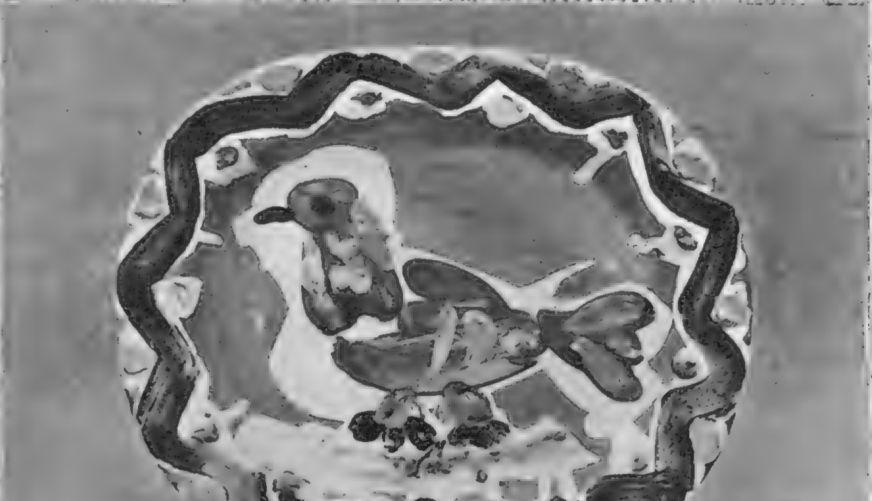
Sparkling fresh from the States, our satirical Bea Lillie (Lady Peel) is back in West End cabaret for the first time post-war. She is booked to open at the Café de Paris on November 13th for a three or four weeks' season. (Photograph by Vivienne)

PICTURE

Pictures on View in London or the Provinces during November

A Horse Sale is one of 150 Rowlandson drawings from the Gilbert Davis Collection. The Arts Council is showing them at Derby, November 11, to December 2.

Mijas, Spain. One of Tristram Hillier's clear-cut paintings at Tooth's, 31, Bruton Street, until November 11.



Some of the pottery that Picasso spent a year making in a light-hearted mood at Vallauris, near Antibes, is now being shown by the Arts Council. *The Red Bird Plate* is in the show due to open at the New Burlington Galleries, London, on November 15.

The Rubens Exhibition at Wildenstein's, 147, New Bond Street, in aid of the Lord Mayor's Thanksgiving Fund, is open until November 11. It consists chiefly of small paintings and drawings, such as *A Woman Churning Butter.*

Chosen by

GALLERY

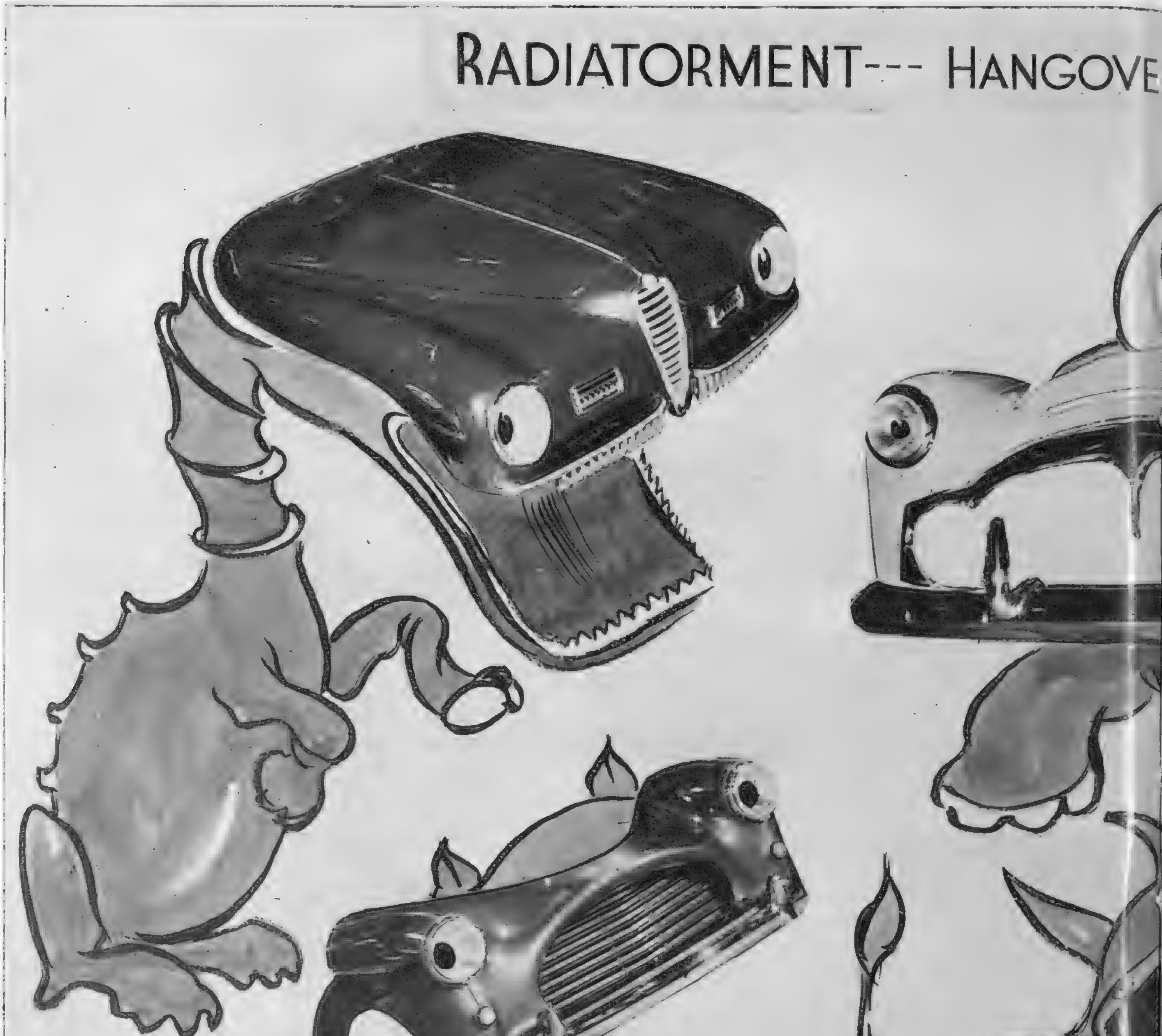
What an excellent nursery frieze *In the Paddock*, by nine-year-old Ursula Berry, would make. This painting was "commended" in the *Sunday Pictorial*'s National Exhibition of Children's Art, which is at Leeds City Art Gallery until November 12; then goes to Leicester on November 27.

All Souls, Langham Place, by Charles Ginner, before it was bombed and before Broadcasting House was built. In the Camden Town Group Exhibition at Lefevre Gallery, 30, Bruton Street, until November 25.

The elegance of French eighteenth-century art is to be seen in miniature at Matthiesen's, 142, New Bond Street. *Femme au Pipeau*, by Boucher, is one of the drawings being shown there in aid of the French Hospital, until November 22.

Though the experts can't decide who painted the *Portrait of a Youth*, they agree it is a fine picture. Now ascribed to Cuyp, it is in the Duke of Bedford's collection from Woburn Abbey. This Arts Council Exhibition is going to Manchester, Nov. 8—Dec. 6.

Wilma Moy Thomas


RADIATORMENT--- HANGOVE

FROM THE 1950 MOTOR SHOW

Old Stagers

ACCOLADE (Aldwych).
Emlyn Williams as a famous author who leads a double life in Regent's Park and Rotherhithe.

SEAGULLS OVER SORRENTO (Apollo).
A naval mixture; comedy and drama on an islet in the Orkneys, with Ronald Shiner as a very able seaman.

ACE OF CLUBS (Cambridge).
Minor Coward—but with the Juvenile Delinquents.

MISTER ROBERTS (Coliseum).
A Pacific voyage with the vast Coliseum stage as an American Navy cargo ship.

WHO IS SYLVIA? (Criterion).
Terence Rattigan's light comedy flits amiably across three periods.

CAROUSEL (Drury Lane).
Forget comparisons and see this as a good Rodgers-Hammerstein musical play in its own right.

THE HOLLY AND THE IVY (Duchess).
Wynyard Browne's Christmas gathering in a Norfolk vicarage is the best domestic play in London.

CAPTAIN CARVALLO (Garrick).
A witty, neo-Ruritanian comedy: Diana Wynyard, James Donald.

RING ROUND THE MOON (Globe).
A charade, taken from the French by Christopher Fry and produced expertly by Peter Brook.

THE SECOND MRS. TANQUERAY (Haymarket).
Eileen Herlie attempts a famous part in Pinero's drama.

THE LITTLE HUT (Lyric).
Three castaways—one of them Robert Morley—frivol on a tropical island.

THE COCKTAIL PARTY (New).
T. S. Eliot's homily in verse.

KING'S RHAPSODY (Palace).
Ivor Novello is the King, and Vanessa Lee his Queen, in Novello's Ruritanian "musical."

HIS EXCELLENCY (Piccadilly).
Eric Portman shows how an ex-docker can govern a Mediterranean island.

TOUCH AND GO (Prince of Wales's).
A flashing Anglo-American revue.

PARTY MANNERS (Princes).
Val Gielgud's good-tempered comedy that alarmed the B.B.C. Board of Governors.

HOME AND BEAUTY (St. Martin's).
Maugham's chuckling farce.

WILL ANY GENTLEMAN? (Strand).
The hunting of the Hare.

JOURNEY'S END (Westminster).
Renewed homage to a great play, ably revived.

HOME AT SEVEN (Wyndham's).
Sir Ralph Richardson is superb as the ordinary man in extraordinary circumstances.

AT THE THEATRE...

★ First Choice ★

"TOP OF THE LADDER"

(St. James's)

As a producer Tyrone Guthrie has long been at the top of the ladder. We do not expect a man with so darting a mind to write a lounge-hall-in-Surrey frivol; and *Top of the Ladder* is defiantly individual. Whether you like it or not will depend on your feelings about Expressionism: Guthrie has enjoyed himself with symbols, fragments of scenery, and flickerings back and forth in time. For my part, helped no doubt by a previous reading of the text, I found much that was both piercing and invigorating. The play, which has been reduced to a reasonable length of two hours and a half, should now pierce deeper and stimulate more surely. On the first night, Guthrie—and it was strange for a producer of his experience—allowed things to run for three hours and a half and sent many people away tired as well as puzzled. Still, I do not imagine that the most weary and the most perplexed left without strong admiration for the acting of John Mills. I cannot think of any player in our theatre who could have moved (as Mills did) so persuasively between child and man in a few steps across the stage.

One of the keys to the piece is found in a last-act speech of Kath, the secretary and office wife: "I think all parents want to live their lives over again through their children. They want to make their children extensions of themselves." But all who hear the play will find their own interpretations and theories. It is something to be discussed: for every person who comes away admiring, I suppose there will be another ready to attack Guthrie for turning a simple tale into something so delightedly complex. The most moving passages are at the last, when Bertie (John Mills) is on his death-bed, and that earlier scene in which he disposes so callously of the dithering old fellow who had aided him in youth. Miles Malleson adds to our regard for him as one of the subtlest character-actors in Britain. When the old man weeps, you will be hard-boiled indeed if you do not feel like weeping with him. I like the control and simplicity of Mary Kerridge; Rachel Kempson and Alison Leggatt never lose command; and Esme Church growls amiably through the old nurse who sits by the side of the stage stitching away at a patchwork quilt of Bertie's life: a part far less annoying than some of my colleagues would have us believe. Alas, I cannot find anything in defence of the little valet, Mikie: he is a horror, though Toke Townley gives a loyal performance.

. . . with J. C. TREWIN

"DEAR MISS PHŒBE"
(Phœnix)

IT is Miss Phœbe Throssel from Quality Street. The play—a gift from the Regency—is Barrie-with-music. Everything is here as of old; but there is also a musical score by Harry Parr Davies, and the Blue and White Room rings with unaccustomed song. Personally, I prefer Barrie unsupported; it can be held that to add music to *Quality Street* is to pile honey upon sugar. That aside, very little damage has been done. Christopher Hassall is the most tactful of adaptors and his lyrics are serviceable. *Quality Street* was never a major piece; but it does now offer the best musical-comedy libretto in London. Carol Raye and Peter Graves can coax along Miss Phœbe and her Valentine; Gretchen Franklin is a good Patty; and Olga Lindo's Miss Susan, that warm-hearted feather-whisk, could hold the theatre in any revival of *Quality Street* unadorned.

★

"THE FOURPOSTER"
(Ambassadors)

I WISH dramatists would cease to write plays for two people. It is rash economy unless the author is uncommonly inventive. Without this invention and the firmest touch on character, a piece is bound to drag and lag. Jan de Hartog here provides another of these needless bits of technical juggling, and I am afraid that Dulcie Gray and Michael Denison—alert players though they are—were unable to keep my rapt attention through the six bedroom scenes that cover fifty years of married life. The people are pleasant; but nothing in particular happens to them, and presently we realise with growing alarm that nothing can. The Denisons serve the piece with all fidelity. At the première it was not their fault that I felt I had spent the evening eating blancmange faintly flavoured with vanilla.

★

"OUT OF THIS WORLD"
(Palladium)

THIS is hardly an apt title, for everyone in a smack-it-across revue is determinedly in this world, and anchored to it. Nothing ethereal here: it is all as matter-of-fact as a packet of highly-coloured boiled sweets. Binnie Hale could not be other than welcome, especially when she revives her *Nanette* songs for us; Nat Jackley is a comedian who stretches himself like a ribbon of chewing-gum; and Warren, Latona and Sparks toss themselves around with apparent pleasure. Most people will be curious about Frankie Howerd. He is still rather tentative. As a single turn, a curly, confidential young man who lets his sentences trail in the wind, he can often be funny. He is less impressive in the sketches.

Next Stage

THE Duke of York's, closed since June, will reopen on November 29 with Benn W. Levy's new play, *Return to Tyassi*. This, presented by Henry Sherek, is the first piece Benn Levy has written since leaving politics to concentrate again on his literary work: we are assured that the theme is not political. Constance Cummings, Alexander Knox, Helen Haye, John Justin, Tilsa Page, Geoffrey Dunn and Hilda Bruce-Potter are in the cast. The theatre has been redecorated in a scheme designed by Cecil Beaton.

SEVEN FOR SHEREK

Return to Tyassi is, I am told, one of seven plays that Henry Sherek has in prospect within the next seven months. We have heard of the Alec Guinness *Hamlet*, announced for next April. In the New Year we are to have *The Seventh Veil*, a play by Sydney and Muriel Box (authors and producers of the film of the same name), in which Ann Todd will take the part she created on the screen. *Who Goes There ?*, a John Dighton comedy which was tried out at Windsor, arrives during the early spring, with Nigel Patrick in the cast. Later come *The Next Lord Chase*, by Anthony Squire and Thomas Browne; Jacques Deval's *To-Night in Samarkand*, so successful in Paris; and Elmer Rice's *Dream Girl* with, it is hoped, Margaret Lockwood.

THE OLD HOME

Dates for the Old Vic season in the Waterloo Road have now been fixed: *Twelfth Night*, produced by Hugh Hunt, November 14; *Bartholomew Fair*, produced by George Devine, December 18; *Henry the Fifth*, produced by Glen Byam Shaw, January 30; *Electra*, produced by Michel Saint-Denis, and *The Wedding*, produced by George Devine, March 13; and *Captain Brassbound's Conversion*, produced by Hugh Hunt, April 17.

ENTER OFFENBACH

Andrew Osborn will make his début in a musical play when Lee Ephraim's presentation of *Music at Midnight* arrives on November 10 at His Majesty's. Genevieve Guitry then makes her first appearance before a London audience. The scene is Paris in 1853, and the piece—book by Guy Bolton, music by Hans May—deals with an imaginary incident in the life of Offenbach (Mr. Osborn). Austin Trevor, Joan Heal, Hannah Watt and Nigel Neilson are also in the cast; and Wallace Douglas produces.

GETTING AROUND

The Daniel Mayer Company will revive *The Silver Curlew*, Eleanor Farjeon's children's play, for a Christmas season at the Fortune, from December 22. . . . Ronald Duncan's translation of Cocteau's *The Typewriter* will be at the Watergate on November 14 with Rosalinde Fuller and Sheila Burrell. . . . *Daphne Laureola* ran for only fifty-six performances on Broadway.

WE TAKE OFF OUR HAT TO . . .

HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF SOMERSET, for coming to Town on a Magic Carpet.

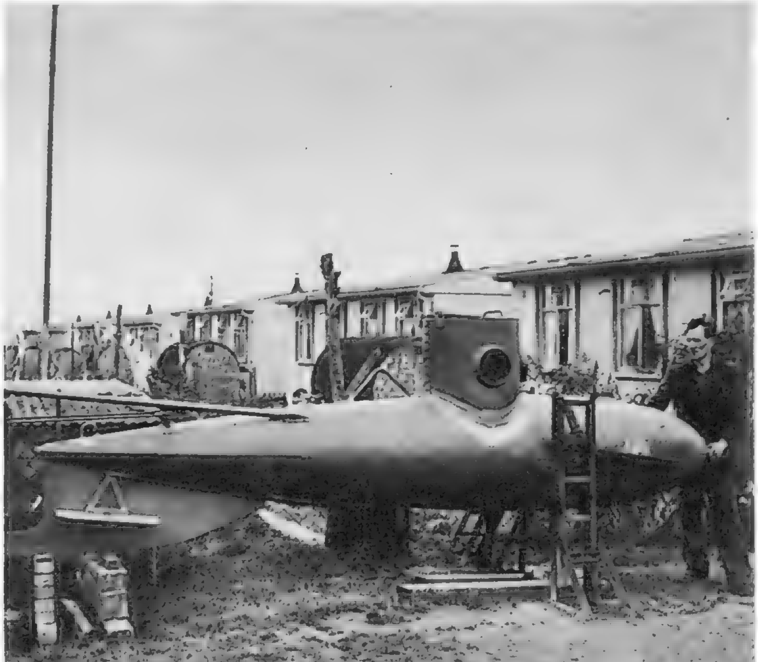
PRESIDENT of the Magic Circle, the Duke of Somerset, in common with other members, handed over his "magic carpet" to an unsurprised cloakroom attendant at the Scala Theatre recently, where the Festival of Magic was taking place. Awaiting his turn is Sid Emons, with a fine Axminster.

LITTLE BARRY BRAME, for following Grandpa's advice and keeping his eye on the ball.

HAMPSHIRE'S youngest amateur golfer, sixteen-months-old Barry Brame, has been cultivating a style of his own these four months in play against Grandfather Jock Woodson, Hampshire's oldest golf professional. His average drive travels about 15 ft.—and nearly always straight—over Hockley Golf Club course.

Ex-Army "type" MICHAEL ASHWIN, for sailing into Earl's Court on a "ship of the desert."

AMONG 7000 Desert Rats brought together for the El Alamein reunion, held recently in the Empress Hall at Earl's Court, was a well-behaved camel borrowed for the occasion from Chessington Zoo, and attended by Arab-attired Zoo official Mr. Page, also lately of the Eighth Army.



FRANK RUSSELL, for beginning a search for Atlantis in the back garden of his "prefab."

DOWN in Biggleswade, Beds., Britain's only backyard-built one-man submarine is nearing completion. Designer Frank Russell has already spent about £120 and two years to build it, from ¼-in. steel plate. It may become the prototype for a heavier craft suitable for an expedition in search of the "lost continent" on the Atlantic sea-bed.

. . . AND WE APPLAUD

MONA INGLESBY

. . . for star achievement in the International Ballet and for her public-spirited fortitude in dancing with a fractured toe in the 'Gaieté Parisienne' ballet at Leeds Grand Theatre. And we offer her our warmest wishes for a speedy and satisfactory recovery. (Photographed by Fred Daniels.)

We say a regretful *au revoir* to Norman Collins who has resigned his post as Television Controller, after a tenure of office which earned everyone's respect.

Paula Hinton and Walter Gore in a charming *divertissement* during a successful ballet programme given recently by the Continental Ballet Company.

Lian Shin-Yang, who sang the title-rôle in Puccini's opera *Madame Butterfly*, looked and acted delightfully, but her voice did not quite come up to the demands of the part.

" And this one is the *pièce de résistance*—it controls the secret sliding panel."

TELEVISION

by CYRIL BUTCHER

WHILE we do not lag behind in our appreciation of the fact that publicity is essential in stimulating and retaining public interest, we do hold that, like everything else, it should be used with discretion. In our opinion, publicity should be used to advertise established facts and not as a medium for airing present pipe-dreams that cannot become facts for some time to come. The latter arouses a feeling of expectancy and dissatisfaction with the present state of affairs that can only be harmful.

Recently television has made so many headlines and has been the subject of so many public statements by responsible people, about the present, the future and infinity, that personally we feel slightly dizzy when we attempt to sort things out. Take, for instance, Pat Hillyard's " extended holiday." Up to now he has been head of light entertainment. One public statement says he is coming back ; another states that he probably won't. Which is it ? Meanwhile Ronnie Waldman—more power to his elbow—is holding the reins of Ally Pally's " Cinderella." Then we are told that this department's house is being busily put in order and that in two or three months variety and light entertainment will be the backbone of television. Wouldn't it be better to leave that sort of statement in abeyance until such time as its claim has been justified ? We take that one with a liberal helping of salt.

Next we read that at a luncheon given by the Radio Industries Club, the chairman of a well-known manufacturing firm urged that a second television system should be inaugurated in this country, one which could operate two separate programmes, run (*a*) by the B.B.C. and (*b*) by commercial interests. He urged further that both of these services should use colour transmissions. Fine and good, and an excellent target to aim at—*eventually*. But it strikes us as extraordinary that this " eventually " was not stressed in the reports. After all, the business of radio manufacturers is to sell their television sets *now*. What is the reaction of the ordinary layman when he reads such a statement ? Probably : " Well, I was thinking of buying a television set, but if they are going to revolutionise the whole system and bring in colour, then I 'll wait a bit." And by " a bit " he will be thinking in terms of months, not, as the speaker probably was, in terms of quite a few years. We cannot dogmatise on that point, not having personally heard the speech. All the same, we feel it is high time that someone in a responsible position should repeat the B.B.C.'s promise made to the public and " the trade " that the present form of transmission will be continued for at least another eight years.

Wilfred Pickles (left) interviewed West Country radio singer and fisherman Bert Middleton in a series of programmes, "Wilfred Pickles at Home."

Max Reinits based the theme of his play *The Million Pound Note* on a short story by Mark Twain. Denys Blakelock and Erik Chitty in a scene from the play.

NOW we turn from the realm of conjecture to incontrovertible fact. We refer to the resignation of Norman Collins from his headship of television. That was a real blow—indeed, a disaster.

Mr. Collins would be the first to protest at his resignation being termed a disaster. It is a strong word, but we are not using it lightly. Men of his calibre are not to be found at every street corner, yet they are vital as leaders. And television needs a strong leader now as never before. It has passed out of its 'prentice stage. Television is no longer in its infancy, as apologists like to claim when things go wrong. It is quite capable of standing on its own feet, and it must do so if it is to go ahead. Mr. Collins realised that, and worked might and main to wean it from the smothering embrace of Mother Sound. But Mother Sound is a jealous woman, and she senses that she is in danger of being supplanted by her intriguing daughter Television in the public's esteem. So at all costs she must maintain her control. We sympathise with the old girl: the situation must be madly irritating for her. All the same, she was silly to let Norman Collins go. He is a man with a brilliant executive brain; he is a born leader, with an immediate grasp of other people's ideas and problems. In a more encouraging era he might easily have become a second Northcliffe. So we, who love television, are grateful that he chose to devote such important years of his life wholeheartedly to it. We regret that circumstances made it impossible for him to continue to do so. His resignation gives point to a remark we once heard: "The B.B.C. isn't a bad job, providing you don't rise too high, do too much, or stay too long."

Meanwhile, we wish George Barnes, the new head, all possible success. Our good wishes also to Cecil McGivern, the new Controller, who for some time has been chiefly responsible for the planning and carrying-out of television programmes. He knows the medium inside out, and can be relied upon to see that its standards progress as steadily as time itself.

WE would be the happiest critic in the world if we could feel that those standards, in all departments, were soon to reach the level attained by Royston Morley's production of Shakespeare's *Richard II*. We can only hope that it was recorded, for it would be a proud example to send to America and other television countries with an attached note: "This is British television at its best." Mr. Morley's direction of the players and his use of the cameras were superb. *Richard II*. is a wordy, episodic play, more remarkable for its beauty of language and individual moments of drama than for its overall plot. It was an occasion for close-ups, and Mr. Morley gave us some remarkable ones. In this he had fine co-operation from the anonymous crew of cameramen, who obviously took unusual pains to compose their pictures. There was beautiful work by the equally anonymous lighting engineer, who produced some amazingly plastic—almost sculpted—effects.

The players were responsible for an avalanche of superb acting. Alan Wheatley, as Richard, showed what an enormous range he has as an artist. Richard is an ungrateful part, decadent, self-pitying and with only one or two moments of grandeur. Mr. Wheatley never faltered or soft-pedalled any of the unsympathetic facets, and in the later sequences was shatteringly moving. Bolingbroke is a more splendid character, and Clement McCallin made him as he was: hard, ruthless and ambitious—a virile adventurer.

John of Gaunt, of course, has the best moment in the play, with that beautiful dying scene which must have given Shakespeare so much satisfaction to write. With this part Henry Oscar almost stole the show, and, had the author not killed off Gaunt so early, would undoubtedly have done so. Poor Joy Shelton, playing the queen, had little chance to do anything but weep, but she wept very prettily. A word of praise, too, for designer Barry Learoyd. The sets were most effective and the costumes really beautiful. But where *did* he find that wig for Mr. Wheatley? It looked rather like one of Claudette Colbert's hair-do's.

Another high-standard programme was the O.B. of the ceremony marking the opening of the new Chamber of the House of Commons. It was an impressive if austere occasion. Much credit, therefore, that television handled it with the simplicity and dignity it deserved. Richard Dimbleby's commentary was a model for such an occasion. It gave one all the facts, pointed out interesting and historical features, and then left it at that.

Though not by nature drawn irresistibly to "discussions," either on the radio or television, we were quite fascinated by a recent discursive programme: "In the News." It was a discussion between Robert Boothby (Tory), W. J. Brown (Independent), Dingle Foot and Michael Foot (Labour). As far as the matter was concerned, it was obviously alert and informed, but it was the *manner* that interested us—especially the manner of Bob Boothby. Whatever one's political tint might be, one could not help but be swept along by his arguments. For Boothby is a television "natural." His "manner" carried all before it and made one aware of a new and alarming potentiality of television. In future, will political parties exploit it as a medium for vote catching? Will they institute schools for developing that "manner"? It gives one somewhat furiously to think.

OUR CRITIC'S CHOICE

Alan Wheatley: For a long series of brilliant performances in a wide range of parts, most of them by no means easy to play. His King Richard was a *tour de force* in unsparing psycho-analysis.

RADIO.—Bernard Braden (seen here with his wife, Barbara Kelly): For "Bedtime with Braden," an exceptionally good casual and sophisticated evening show.

Frederick Laws

LITERATURE.—A. J. Cronin, who returns to form in his new novel, *The Spanish Gardener.*

CHOICE OF THE MONTH

Selected by our Panel of Experts

SCREEN.—Françoise Rosay, First Lady of the French screen. As the formidable Madame of a crooks' hotel in *Macadam*, she carries the film securely on her snugly-tailored shoulders.

C. A. Lejeune

STAGE.—John Mills: For the remarkable way in which he commands the stage during the whole of Tyrone Guthrie's *Top of the Ladder* at the St. James's Theatre.

J. C. Trewin

DIANE HART

...now in the new Terence Rattigan play, "Who is Sylvia?", at the Criterion, scored a personal success here and in America in "The Chiltern Hundreds". (Photographed by Baron)

"THE GLASS MENAGERIE"—A film of brittle charm from the stage play of the same name. Gertrude Lawrence and Jane Wyman have the leading rôles of mother and daughter.

FILMS IN BRIEF

"SEPTEMBER AFFAIR"—Joan Fontaine and Joseph Cotten, as a lady concert pianist and an engineer whose wife doesn't share his passion for irrigation projects, combine an autumn romance with a Cook's tour of Italy.

"RETURN OF THE FRONTIERSMAN."—One of the livelier pioneer Westerns, with plenty of fancy shooting and riding, and some startling stereoscopic Technicolor pictures of the Wyoming countryside.

"TWO FLAGS WEST."—A duller but more *significant* "Western," with Joseph Cotten and Cornel Wilde, about the Civil War amnesty under which Confederate prisoners-of-war and Northern troops rode out together against the Indians. The chief novelty is that the Indians are allowed to win hands down.

"IF YOU THINK OF SINGING."—Judy Garland, as a lady farmer, and Gene Kelly, as a producer, put on the most elaborate musical show ever staged in a country barn. Noisy, agile, corny.

"GIRL OF THE YEAR."—Joan Caulfield and Robert Cummings in a juicy titbit about a lady professor who graduates as a model for the all-but altogether. Tastes differ.

"THE WOLF OF THE SILA."—That handsome wench, Silvana Mangano, in a stormy Italian melodrama about a girl who sets out to seduce both a father and son as part of a family vendetta.

"CITY LIGHTS."—Welcome revival of the first Chaplin sound-film, which reminds us that the little man in baggy trousers was the greatest of them all.

"THE MAGNET."—Not quite as good as it might have been, but excellently acted by all the children in the cast, headed by William Fox, seen above with Kay Walsh.

★ ★ ★ AT THE

REVIEWS by C. A. LEJEUNE

"THE GLASS MENAGERIE"

THE charm of *The Glass Menagerie* is as brittle as its title: try to grasp it too firmly, and it shatters in your hand. The play from which it was made was not universally popular when it came to London last season, although I have known people who went three or four times to see it; nor would I dare to say with any certainty, "This is your picture." I myself fought against it for quite a long time before I succumbed.

The story is told by a young officer of the Merchant Marine, who recalls, on the high seas, his old home in St. Louis, and the mother and sister he left behind him. His memories are not particularly happy ones; wistful, rather, and a little remorseful. The mother, as we see her, is a faded, anxious beauty, whose husband has deserted her long ago, and who drifts helplessly between the worries of everyday life and memories of her girlhood in the Deep South. The sister is a cripple, with a cripple's painful shyness and self-consciousness. She lives in her dreams, which centre round a collection of small glass animals. The idea of meeting a stranger makes her physically sick, and yet it is the mother's overpowering ambition to find a husband for her.

Day after day she badgers her son, a packing clerk in a warehouse, to bring home a "gentleman caller," and when at last he produces a likely type, she sets about dragooning him towards courtship, until he announces, very gently but firmly, that he is already engaged to another girl.

Upon this fragile plot, playwright Tennessee Williams wove a delicate tissue of dreams and fantasies, and the film people have based a rather too solid superstructure. The author himself described it as "a memory play—dimly lighted—not realistic," and the theatre presented it in a series of fragmentary scenes, almost dreamlike in their glimpses through transparent curtains, their shifting, softly-focused light and colour. The film has destroyed a good deal of this magic quality by insisting on a generally realistic interpretation and a "happy" ending, but even so, there are passages that seem to me tremendously moving, and the four leading players do well by the author.

Our Gertrude Lawrence is a surprise choice for the mother, but she pours out the honeyed cadences of the old plantation as though she were born to them. Jane Wyman, in a blonde wig, recalls the charm of "Johnny Belinda" as the crippled sister, and Kirk Douglas makes the "gentleman caller" both credible and likeable. Best of all, perhaps, is Arthur Kennedy as the harried brother, a young man who goes to sea to escape from a humdrum existence, and finds he is haunted by his dreams.

★

"THE MAGNET"

IF only *The Magnet* were a rather better film, what a good film it would be! It has all the makings of a successor to the delightful *Hue and Cry*. It is a neat story about children, by Ealing's T. E. B. Clarke, who understands children, particularly small boys, so well; a real-life setting (of Merseyside) splendidly photographed; a production team with taste and humour; and a good cast. But somehow the pieces refuse to come together into an entirely satisfactory whole.

The main plot of *The Magnet* is simply this: A small boy, playing on the sands, tricks an even smaller boy into swapping him a magnet for an "invisible watch." When the smaller boy's nanny raises a cry of "Stop, thief!" he runs away; guiltily disposes of the magnet to the first gullible grown-up he can find, and hopes he has heard the last of the transaction. But he hasn't. The grown-up uses the incident of the unknown boy's sacrifice as the talking-point of a campaign to raise money for an iron lung, enlarging on the story as he goes along. Where is this noble boy? He must be found and awarded a civic medal, says the Mayor. And presently the conscience-stricken child finds himself the object of a search all over Merseyside, not dreaming that he is wanted, not as a criminal, but a hero.

Where the film errs, in my opinion, is that it does not confine itself to this simple plot. There is quite enough here to make a good little picture with a tidy shape: a beginning, a middle, and an end. (I like very much the repetition of the opening scene, with variations, as a postscript.) But what must the author do but digress on all sorts of side issues, few of which are necessary to, and some of which distract from, the real fun of the story.

However, I like the film too much to end this review on a note of complaint. All the children in the cast, led by Master William Fox, are excellent, and I particularly like a scene in a railway carriage, in which a foolish grown-up suggests that a boy addressed by his schoolmates as "Nosnibor" must be Polish. Patiently they explain that his name is Robinson—"only we spell it backwards." *That* was invented by a man who knows what boys are.

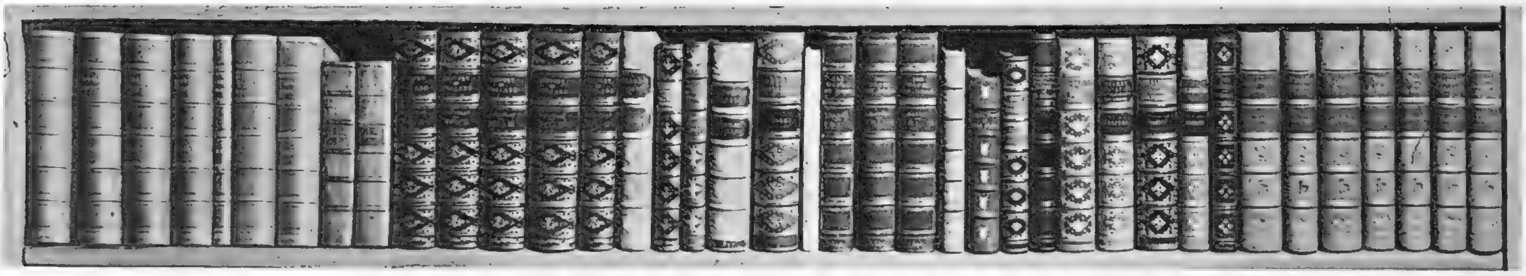
CINEMA ★ ★ ★

PREVIEW

HIGHLY DANGEROUS, which marks Margaret Lockwood's return to films, is a modern spy-thriller especially written for her by Eric Ambler. The story is set in a Police State behind the Iron Curtain, where, it is believed, germ warfare is being prepared. To discover the truth of this, Frances Conway, a young entomologist working in the British Biological Control Laboratories, is asked to undertake a secret mission to the country concerned. Her adventures there, which involve violence and murder, lead up to an exciting climax. The film is due to be seen about Christmas-time.

On the right: Frances Conway (Margaret Lockwood) begs newspaperman Bill Casey (Dane Clark) to hold up his story for the sake of British security measures.

Below: Frances drops a drug into the beer of the police agent who has been trailing them, while Bill distracts his attention.



OUR BOOKSHELF

by RUPERT CROFT-COOKE

THE DEAD SEAGULL. By George Barker. (*Lehmann ; 7s. 6d.*)
COUNTY CHRONICLE. By Angela Thirkell. (*Hamish Hamilton ; 12s. 6d.*)
OPERATION CICERO. By L. Moyzisch. (*Wingate ; 8s. 6d.*)
THE CASE OF THE HAPPY WARRIOR. By Christopher Bush. (*Macdonald ; 8s. 6d.*)

THE words "experimental novel" strike a cold chill in me, and the phrase used by the publisher about this book, a "poet's novel," is not much more encouraging. Yet *The Dead Seagull*, by George Barker, seems to have been an experiment worth making and its poetic prose is sharp-edged and excellent. It opens somewhat grandiloquently. "There is a story to tell," we learn, "a story that has no place in history and no real claim upon the attention of the fates." It is a story "which proves that Love, with no blood on its knife, does not sleep easily if it sleeps at all, until every one of its devotees lies dead." I cannot say whether or not the story does in fact prove this, because I am unfortunately unable to understand what it means, but it certainly proves that Mr. Barker can sometimes write uncommonly well. As soon as he ceases to flutter about among mysteries and begins to narrate, one is conscious of quite exceptional gifts. There is, very early in the book, a passage of no more than 300 words which quite beautifully and succinctly tells a complete life-story, that of the protagonist's father. Later a triangle of a man and two women takes shape and the writer is free to roll his magnificent sentences around such naturalistic happenings, in a seaside cottage, as the wife's death in giving birth to a dead child and her cursing the husband as she dies—or cursing the husband's lover who was present, it is impossible to say which. What saves it all from being high falutin and literary is that implicit in it, behind its occasional sententiousness and rhythmic polysyllables there is a robustness, a sense of humour, without which the book might have been morbid or silly. I am sure that it was a worth-while experiment, and I think it may prove to be an important one.

BOOKS IN BRIEF

EMMA CONQUEST.
By Rene Ray. (*Eyre and Spottiswoode ; 10s. 6d.*)

Imaginary biography of an inventor's daughter who views life as a fight: "Emma Conquest *versus* the world." I'm frankly on the world's side.

THE HOUSE BY THE MEDLAR TREE.
By Giovanni Verga. (*Weidenfeld and Nicolson ; 10s. 6d.*)

A good translation by Eric Mosbacher of the novel *I Malavoglia*, which was first published in 1881 and tells a crudely tragic story about Sicilian peasants.

BEHOLD THY DAUGHTER.
By Neil Paterson. (*Hodder and Stoughton ; 10s. 6d.*)

Story of a Scottish fishing port of 100 years ago. It is plainly told and has few fal-lals or fireworks, but of its kind it is a very good piece of work.

THE WORK OF GOD.
By Giuseppa Berto. (*Secker and Warburg ; 8s. 6d.*)

Four clever short stories by the author of *The Sky is Red*.

THE author of *County Chronicle* has a name which tempts one to start clerihews about her, leaving others to finish them—

Miss Angela Thirkell
Is popular in a certain circle. . . .

And she is—immensely popular, as the sales of her interminable series of Barsetshire novels prove. The circle can scarcely be that of the people she describes, for where a "county" society survives at all in England it certainly does not do so in numbers comparable with the readers of these books. They are mild, pleasant family chronicles, never very funny or very tragic, about people who are not very good or bad, happy or unhappy. All in this backwater is placid, a little sentimental and invariably "*nice*." Even the Socialist M.P. for Barchester is gentle enough in the eyes of his neighbours to speak disparagingly of his own party, and there are a number of grimly good-natured ecclesiastics and noblemen who go on talking indefatigably, marrying and giving in marriage, growing pigs and producing Gilbert and Sullivan, and discussing one another's affairs—money, love and home. In this particular novel there is a welter of marriages and engagements and refined love-affairs, and the story runs about the county like a vast searchlight to illumine first a bit of this family, then of that, till even the addict must feel almost surfeited with Brandons and Marlings and Dales and Canons of Barchester Cathedral and the Duke of Omnium.

AS a reviewer I would say of *Operation Cicero* that it is readable and exciting. As a former field security officer, I think it almost as fictitious as the stories of flashing lights and blonde spies which cropped up so regularly during the war. It is an account written by an attaché at the German Embassy in Ankara of the work supposed to have been done for him by an agent who claimed to be employed as valet to the British Ambassador. This man, who was nicknamed Cicero, maintained that he had access to the Ambassador's safe, and was able to extract and photograph top secret documents. The few facts which the author claims to have gathered from these documents, such as the date of the Normandy landings, would not have been communicated to our Ambassador in Ankara, and the back-scratching between Herr Moyzisch in his book and Herr von Papen in his postscript, does nothing to increase our confidence in either. There may have been such a creature as the Cicero of this book; he may even have secured and sold a certain amount of information. But as a male Mata Hari of the Second World War he is a somewhat resounding flop.

MR. CHRISTOPHER BUSH invents a neat mystery and plays fair with his readers. Moreover, his detective, Ludovic Travers, is not altogether impossible, and the people in the story are beings of flesh and blood first and suspects afterwards. The case opens in the classical Baker Street manner by a private detective being consulted by two members of one family—each coming to him unknown to the other. The family is that founded by a famous Victorian novelist and the literary tradition is kept up by two grandsons, while an alibi is provided for one man by his supposed attendance at a P.E.N. Conference in Copenhagen. The ball of suspicion is set rolling by two attempts on the life of a young woman, and thereafter we're away with a whoop, trailing and finding clues and cross-examining all the way to the last unexpected twist. Mr. Bush has an urbane and intelligent way of dealing with mystery which makes his work much more attractive than the stampeding sensationalism of some of his rivals.

"WITH BEST WISHES"

IT is by no means too early to think of Christmas presents, especially for friends overseas, and those in search of a gift a little out of the ordinary will find that a year's subscription to *The Sketch* will be very much appreciated.

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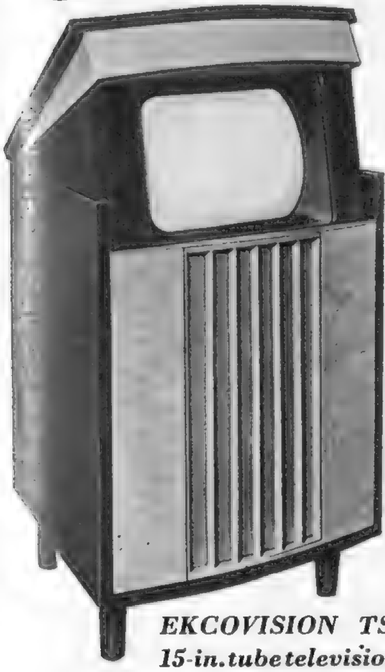

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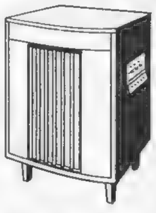

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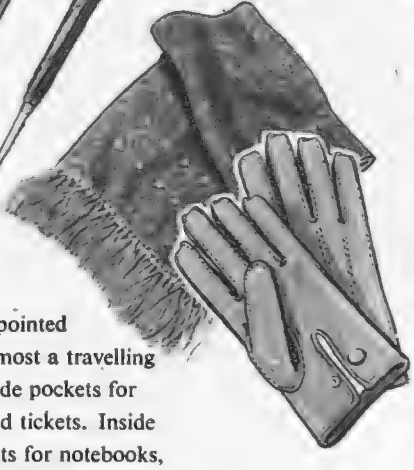

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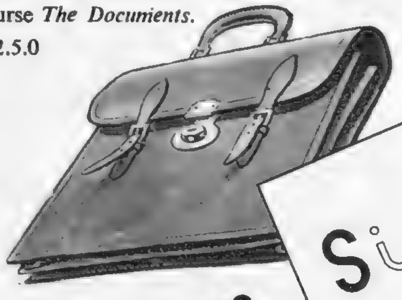

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Outside a little Venetian cafe: a cocktail dress in black-shot-with-green plisse. Young and promising designer Brian Hart cut it dramatically with one bare shoulder. Madge Chard studded the black velvet cap with tiny sequins.

background...

VENICE—a city with great magnetic power over the tourist; perphaps most wonderful setting in a country rich in wonders. Italy has everything: sun, mountains, lakes, delicious food and wine, friendliness, charm and good service; art and architecture that all the world come to see. It was against this background that we photographed some of the finest of British couture.

By the gates of the Palazzo Mocenigo: Sheridan's evening gown, a sheath of black velvet breaking into a 'frou-frou' of tulle.

Two creations by the Dutch designer Herbert Sidon: On the bridge over a canal—a black velvet dress with a detachable side train in black and scarlet net; admired by the gondolier—a dress of blackberry-coloured cloque, with a raised design of black roses, whose brief halter top is finished with a wicked-looking black chiffon rose.

On the roof terrace of the Hotel Danielli: a panorama view of Venice at the entrance of the Grand Canal, and San Giorgio church on the horizon, as a background to Joy Ricardo's red velveteen evening wrap, flowing full length to the floor and lined with green taffeta.

VENICE

by Elizabeth Penrose

All the jewellery is from Cameo Corner.

WHAT GOES ON

Our Puppets Select Their List of Coming Events

★ *This List went to Press last week, so please check with the Daily Papers.*

CEREMONY

The King and Queen visit the Stepney-Poplar reconstruction area on Nov. 9.

Princess Elizabeth visits the headquarters of the R.A.F. Fighter Command at Stanmore, Middlesex, on Nov. 9. On Nov. 10 she visits the Guild of Air Pilots, Grocers' Hall. On Nov. 15 she visits Swindon.

The King and Queen, with Princess Elizabeth and Princess Margaret, attend the Annual British Legion Festival of Remembrance at Royal Albert Hall on Nov. 11. On Nov. 12 the King and Princess Elizabeth attend the Remembrance Service at the Cenotaph; the Queen attends the Middle Temple Service, St. Dunstan's-in-the-West.

Princess Margaret attends the annual display of the Brady Girls' Club, Spitalfields, on Nov. 14.

The Queen attends the Rural Music Schools Association Festival, Royal Albert Hall, on Nov. 18.

CUPID

The engagement is announced between:

Robin John, son of Major R. H. **Sheepshanks**, of Old Rookery House, Eyke, Woodbridge, Suffolk, and the Hon. Mrs. Beccari, of Florence, Italy, and Lilias Mulgrave, daughter of Sir Humphrey and Lady **Noble**, of Walwick Hall, Humshaugh, Northumberland.

Christopher John, son of the Hon. H. W. and Mrs. **Brooks**, of Ewdness, Bridgnorth, Shropshire, and Patricia Beverly, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. W. **Matthews**, of Heathcroft, Hertford Heath, Herts.

Anthony William, son of Sir William **Garthwaite**, Bt., of Nassau, Bahamas, and of the late Janet Lady Garthwaite, and the Hon. Waveney Mancroft Samuel, daughter of the late Lord **Mancroft** and of Lady Mancroft, of 48, Montagu Sq., W.1.

Eric Ernest, son of Mr. and Mrs. G. E. **Cuthbert**, of Walnut House, Scawby, Lincs., and the Hon. Edith Ellen, only child of Lord and Lady **Quibell**, of Manston, Scunthorpe.

Michael Charles, son of Col. the Rt. Hon. O. F. **Stanley**, M.C., M.P., of Folly Farm, Sulhamstead, Berks., and the late Lady Maureen Stanley, and Ailleen Fortune, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Owen Hugh **Smith**, of 39, Charles Street, W.1.

Major David Carol **Mather**, M.C., Welsh Guards, son of Mr. and Mrs. L. E. Mather, of Myddelton, Roehampton, S.W.15, and the Hon. Philippa Selina **Bewicke-Copley**, daughter of Lord and Lady Cromwell, of Misterton Hall, Rugby.

Meyrick Adam, son of Mr. and Mrs. Adam **Ovens**, of Linksfield, Aberlady, East Lothian, and Juliet, daughter of Sir Edmund **Findlay**, Bt., of Aberlour, and Mrs. Jack Macfadyen, Mendlesham Manor, near Stowmarket, Suffolk.

Captain Robert **O'Grady**, M.C., Irish Guards, son of Lt.-Col. P. J. O'Grady, of Abingdon, Shankill, Co. Dublin, and the late Mrs. O'Grady, and the Hon. Joan **Ramsbotham**, daughter of Lord and Lady Soulbury, of Kingswood, Leighton Buzzard, Beds.

SPORT

RACING

Nov.	8–11.	Liverpool.
,,	10, 11.	Lingfield Park.
,,	13, 14.	Wolverhampton.
,,	16–18.	Manchester.
,,	17, 18.	Sandown Park.
,,	20, 21.	Birmingham.
,,	22, 23.	Doncaster.

GENERAL SPORT

GOLF: The Club *v.* Cambridge U.G.C. at Moor Park, Nov. 11. The Army G.C. *v.* Oxford U.G.C. at Camberley Heath on Nov. 12. The Club *v.* Oxford U.G.C. at Moor Park on Nov. 18.

CAR RACING: Grand Prix Automobile du Maroc a Casablanca, in France on Nov. 12. The London to Brighton Veteran Car Run on Nov. 19.

ENTERTAINMENT

NEW STAGE PRODUCTIONS

"Music at Midnight" (His Majesty's)—musical play set in Paris in 1853, with Genevieve Guitry. Nov. 10.

"Twelfth Night" (Old Vic)—first production of the 1950-51 season at the newly rebuilt Old Vic Theatre, Waterloo Road. Nov. 14.

"Preserving Mr. Panmure" (Arts) — revival of Pinero's comedy. Nov. 15.

"The Children's Hour" (New Bolton's Theatre)—Peter Cotes re-opens the Bolton's Theatre with a play by Lilian Hellmann. Nov. 21.

"Return to Tyassi" (Duke of York's)—Ben Levy's new play, with Constance Cummings. Nov. 29.

"Let's Make an Opera" (Lyric, Hammersmith)—by Benjamin Britten, revived from Dec. 5.

MUSIC

At the Royal Albert Hall:

B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra conducted by Basil Cameron, on Nov. 8. First performance in England of "Pianoforte Concerto" by Poulenc.

London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Walter Susskind on Nov. 12.

Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Fürtwangler on Nov. 13.

The Alexandra Choir presents Verdi's "Requiem," with the London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Charles Proctor on Nov. 14.

B.B.C. Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Adrian Boult gives the first performance of Alan Rawsthorne's "Symphony" on Nov. 15. Soloist: Eileen Joyce.

London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Josef Krips, gives a Brahms concert on Nov. 19.

New London Orchestra conducted by Alec Sherman gives a Tchaikovsky concert on Nov. 19. Soloist: Moura Lympany.

Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Rudolf Schwarz, on Nov. 21. Soloist: Frank Osborn.

B.B.C. Choral Society and Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent, Sir George Dyson and Leslie Woodgate, on Nov. 22.

OPERA

At the Royal Opera House: Covent Garden Opera Season. First performance of Tosca on Nov. 18.

At Sadler's Wells: The opera season continues. Two performances only of "Il Tabarro" and "Gianni Schicchi," Nov. 9 and 18.

The National Light Opera Company will appear at The Grand, Wolverhampton, from Nov. 20.

BALLET

At Sadler's Wells: The ballet season continues with performances every Tuesday evening and Saturday matineé.

At the Stoll Theatre: Festival Ballet with Alicia Markova and Anton Dolin, until Dec. 16.

ART

At Victoria and Albert Museum: Arts and Crafts Exhibition; Coloured Woodcuts.

Drawings by Sir William Russell Flint at the Fine Art Society, 148, New Bond Street, W.1.

Paintings by Robert Medley: "Trompe L'Œil"—Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century Illusionism, at Hanover Gallery, 32a, St. George Street, Hanover Square, W.1.

The Camden Town Group at Lefevre Gallery, 30, Bruton Street, W.1.

Paintings by Ivon Hitchens and works by Claude Venard at the Leicester Galleries, Leicester Square.

"Picasso in Provence," from Nov. 15, at the New Burlington Galleries, Old Burlington Street, W.1.

Paintings by Jacob Bornfriend and Choice Pieces of Sculpture, at Roland Browse and Delbanco, 19, Cork Street, W.1.

Royal Society of Painters in Water Colours and Royal Society of Miniature Painters, Sculptors and Engravers, at R.W.S. Galleries, 26, Conduit Street, W.1.

French Masters of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries from Nov. 13, at Marlborough Gallery, 17, Old Bond Street.

"British Theatre, 1530-1900," at the National Book League, 7, Albemarle Street, W.1.

SOCIAL EVENTS

Royal Variety Performance takes place at the London Palladium on Nov. 13.

Christmas Cracker Bazaar at the May Fair Hotel, in aid of the National Association of Girls' Clubs and Mixed Clubs, on Nov. 15 and 16.

International Ball at the Dorchester, in aid of the United Nations Association, on Nov. 15.

The annual United Charities Fair takes place at the Dorchester on Nov. 20.

Florence Nightingale Hospital Centenary Dinner Ball at Park Lane Hotel. Nov. 22.

A special gala performance of the Markova-Dolin Festival Ballet, in aid of the Three Arts Club, at the Stoll Theatre on Nov. 27. Her Majesty will attend.

A ball at the Dorchester in aid of the West London Hospital Nurses' Club on Nov. 28. The Duchess of Gloucester will attend.

The 223rd Foyle's Luncheon takes place at the Dorchester on Nov. 30, in honour of Milton Shulman's book "How to be a Celebrity."

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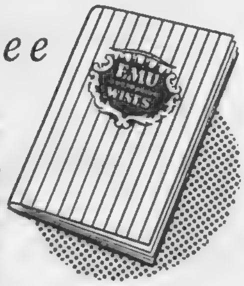

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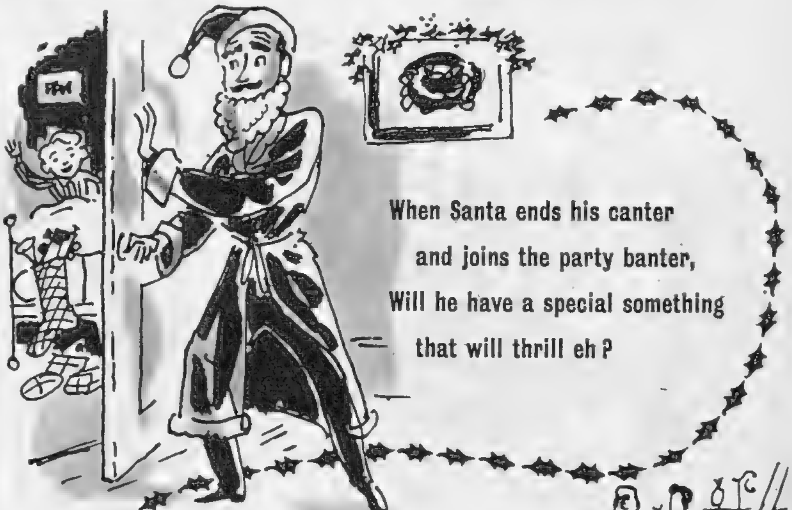

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He'll relax and take a glass,
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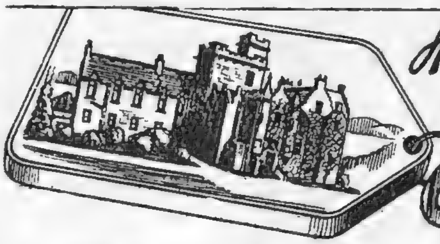

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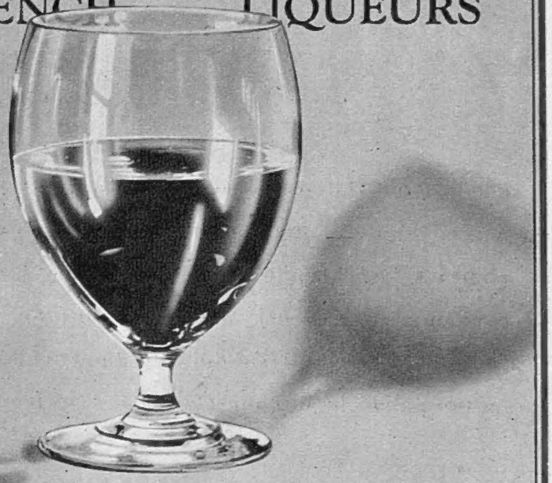

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Printed in England by The Illustrated London News and Sketch, Ltd., Milford Lane, London, W.C.2, and Published Fortnightly at the Office, Commonwealth House, 1, New Oxford Street, London, W.C.1. Wednesday, November 8, 1950. Re-entered as Second-Class Matter, August 15, 1941, at the Post Office at New York (N.Y.), under the Act of March 3, 1879.
Postage Rates :—Inland 2d. Canada 1½d. Elsewhere Abroad 2½d.